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## JAMES NOURSE OF VIRGINIA.

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James Nourse was born in Herefordshire, England, July 19, 1731. He married, September 30, 1753, in London, Sarah Fouace, who was of Huguenot descent. In 1768, after carefully considering the relative advantages of his native land and America, he determined to emigrate for the benefit of his family. Accordingly, he left London on the 16th of March, 1769, with his wife and nine children and 116 boxes, crates and bundles containing household and kitchen furniture; which goes to prove that he came to stay. They arrived at Hampton the 10th of May. The following year Mr. Nourse purchased "Piedmont," a plantation near Charlestown, Va., now in Berkeley county, W. Va.

In 1775 Mr. Nourse visited "Kentuke," and located 3,700 acres of land. A well preserved diary, highly prized by his descendants, gives an interesting account of this trip.

The following extracts from public records and family papers are of interest:

1776. "An act for establishing a town at the Warm Springs, in the county of Berkeley, Va.

"Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, That fifty acres of land adjoining the said springs, being part of a larger tract, the property of the right honorable Thomas Lord Fairfax, or other person or persons, holding the same by a grant or conveyance from him, be, and the same is hereby, vested in Bryan Fairfax, Thomas Bryan Martin, Warner Washington, \* \* Samuel Washington, \* \* James Nourse, gentlemen, trustees, to be by them, or any seven of them, laid out into lots of one-quarter of an acre each, with convenient streets, which shall be, and the same is hereby, established a town by the name of Bath." (*Hening's Statutes at Large of Virginia*, Vol. IX, page 247.)

"Lands of Bryan Obanion, escheated to the commonwealth to be sold.

"Be it therefore enacted that from and after the passing of this act the said 257 acres of land, with the appurtenances, be, and the same is hereby, vested in James Nourse, Thomas Rutherford, Thomas Hite, gentlemen, or any two or more of them, in fee simple in trust." (*Hening's Statutes*, Vol. IX, page 576.)

Friday, Dec. 27, 1776. "Resolved, That \$3,333.33⅓ be advanced to Mr. James Nourse for the use of the Militia of Berkeley and Frederick counties, in Virginia, who are about to march to reinforce Gen'l Washington, the said Mr. James Nourse to be accountable for the expenditure. (*American Archives*, 5th Series, Vol. III, pages 1611-12, War Department.)

Mar. 29, 1777. "Debit my father, James Nourse, to money in my hands, etc., for a balance due by him to the Treasury Board, being the residue of £1,000 Virginia money received by him to equip and furnish forth Volunteer Companies from Berkeley and Frederick counties, in Virginia, agreeable to his estimate of the ballance Virginia currency, £229."

"3d Apr. Paid some time last month the postage of a letter covering sundry receipts for money paid by father to the Captains of the Frederick and Berkeley Co. Volunteers, to be deducted out of public money in my hands." (Joseph Nourse's rough waste book, A. 13.)

James represented Berkeley county in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1778.

"The House of Delegates of the State of Virginia consisted of 152 members. Berkeley had two members, chosen bi-ennially."

In the Journal of said House—from October 5, 1778, to December 19, 1778—the name of Nourse appears. Wednesday, Oct. 7th, 1778. "Ordered that the Sergeant at Arms attending this House take into his custody Thomas Jefferson, and James Nourse, member for the county of Berkeley. Saturday, Oct. 10, 1778. The House being informed that Mr. James Nourse, one of the members for the county of Berkeley, attended in the custody of the Sergeant at Arms—Ordered that the said Burr Harrison and James Nourse be discharged out of custody to-day, paying fines. Same day James Nourse was put on Committee of Propositions and Grievances, and afterwards on various special Committees." (*Statistical Gazetteer of the States of Virginia and North Carolina*, 1855, by Edwards.)

The Journal of the House of Delegates records that these arrests were made because of non-attendance.

The following letter, written by Mr. Nourse to his wife, November 5, 1778, from Williamsburg, gives some account of his experiences at this period:

"MY DEAR LOVE:

"As Major Hunter leaves this place tomorrow morning, I am sate down to write, tho no tidings of your health (afternoon—I was called on a Committee, so was prevented going on). The post is now arrived and have the pleasure to hear you are better. I wrote to James a long letter p. post last week & to you Monday p. Paddy Murray, but tis possible this by Major Hunter you may receive before either, as Mr. Murray proposed thro' Alexandria. I thank my Dear James for his great Attention to you. I most heartily wish twas in my power to relieve him; at present it is inconsistent with my duty & Interest.

"I expect soon the bill will be brought on for opening a Land office, in which the preservation of my Kentucke lands are connected. It was decided yesterday that Hendersons & all purchases with the Indians

without the Consent of the Government within the Virginia Chartered limits were void—but he will be allowed something towards his Expenses. \* \* \*

“Tell Col. Washington when you see him that leave is obtained to bring in a bill for the sale of the late Mr. Thornton’s land. I have drank tea at Mr. Hubbard’s twice. She has long been distressed at his not taking the Oath of Allegiance.

“A bill is preparing to prevent the return of Scotch & other Tories & to expel them the State—but with an allowance to those that have behaved neutral yet to take the oath \* \* notice for every one that has anything to allege to \* \* Contrary make it appear. Mr. Hubbard intends putting in on that footing when the bill is finished. I carried it to him for his perusal this morning. The bill is violent, but I hope to get it softened. I told a Whole Committee this morning that I perceived its support by envy, hatred & malice! I laugh at and argue with them—but still I fear ’twill be Violent. I have made an acquaintance in town with a Gentleman, the owner of a tolerable collection of books, not that I have much time on my hands, as Committees sit before & after the House. When people are going to supper I go to bed; in the morning I often open the doors; James will often inquire the price of grain. Colo. Hite told me that wheat was 4 dollars before he came out, but I fancy ’twas only in his brain. The Major is going, so must bid my Dearest Love adieu, & believe me the greatest pleasure I can receive will be to return & find you in health, being

“Your very Affectionate & Faithful Husband,

“JAMES NOURSE.”

About 1781 Mr. Nourse removed to Annapolis, having been appointed Commissioner to settle the claims of Maryland against the United States.

FROM JOSEPH NOURSE’S BOOK OF ACCOUNTS, PAGE 18:

Philadelphia, Nov. 4, 1783. “Cash dr. to James Nourse, Sen.: Received of the United States for his salary and that of his clerk to 30 Sept., as Commissioner for settling the accounts of the United States in the State of Maryland.” (Amount not given.)

EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL OF JAMES NOURSE:

“Annapolis, Jan. 13th, 1784. Breakfasted at home \* fed my horse at the highlands \* arrived at Baltimore about six o’clock.” Next day he went to Bushtown \* crossed at Susquehanna ferry and arrived (illegible) at half after 4 \* sent a note to Mr. Hollingsworth \* said he believed I could do no business here; the vouchers that he promised me, he says he has Col. Pettit’s receipts for. Showed me a copy of a letter transmitted to him by Mr. Pettit, wherein Mr. Morris said that Mr.

Nourse has only to settle claims of Individuals, not being employed in departments \* no chance of having the vouchers, so determined to return to-morrow morning; on which I wrote the following advertisement and sent a copy of it with the following letter to Col. H.:

"Jan. 16th, 1784.

"James Nourse, Commissioner for settling the accounts between the State of Maryland and the U. S., and the claims of Individuals against the United States for provisions, etc., furnished the army within said State, Maryland, has returned to Annapolis without waiting the advertised time, as he cannot, as he had reason to expect, obtain of Col. Henry Hollingsworth the vouchers on which the said claims and the certificates for the same were founded."

"Sir, it appears proper on my not attending here the advertised time to leave answer to any claimants that may apply for the liquidation of their account, and as I have taken the liberty of using your name, you should be acquainted with it before I leave town, tho' I have no doubt of your approbation. I am Sir, &c.,

"J. N."

Mr. Nourse usually traveled on horseback and at all seasons, sometimes through rain and snow, making such stops as his appointments required. At the same time, he constantly gave minute directions to his agent at Piedmont farm; for example:

"Sow carrot seed radish seed, small salad herbs, dress asparagus bed and plant cabbage and colewort in the alleys. Propagate gooseberry and current trees by cuttings \* transplant strawberries, raspberries; plant tulips, hyacinths, ranunculus, anamones, crocus, snowdrops, narcissus, jonquils, hardy flowering shrubs, roses, honeysuckle, jasmine."

The records show that Mr. Nourse's residence in Annapolis was temporary. The ill health of his wife caused him to consider a removal to a climate cooler than that of Virginia; which, however, was prevented by the death of Mrs. Nourse on September 7, 1784.

The will of James Nourse was written March 23, 1784, and was witnessed by Horatio Gates, A. Paca, Chris'r Richmond. By his death, October 10th, 1784, Virginia lost a devoted son and the county an ardent patriot. "His character for integrity in all his dealings, his respectability as a magistrate of the county, and the kindness of his disposition caused him to be universally esteemed and beloved."

MARIA COOK NOURSE LYLE.